Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the paragraph on page 19, lines 17 through 26, to read:

That the fiber optic ring performs switching within its network in response to a failure transparently with respect to the IP router suggests that throughput redundancy is required. In other words, the capacity of the working paths in a fiber optic ring network must be duplicated in a protection path, such as path 110 in Figure 1, to have a system that transparently switches user traffic paths whenever a communication link failure occurs. It is common, by way of example, to have channels of at least 155 Mbps capacity to be fully reserved on the protection path for corresponding channels on the working path. Thus, while the solution of FIG. 1 is advantageous in that protection switching occurs quickly at the layer 1 and layer 2 levels, it is not an economic solution in terms of transport efficiency.

Please amend the paragraph on page 33, lines 6 through 17, to read:

Memory 504 comprises random access memory (RAM) with read/write capability for storing operational information while node 500 is operational and is receiving power. Memory portions 504A and 504B are for storing information regarding forwarding tables and network conditions network conditions and forwarding tables, respectively. By way of example, if node 500 either determines on its own or is informed of a network communication link failure, information defining the type of failure and its location are stored in memory portion 506A of memory 506. The forwarding table in memory portion 504A 504B is stored in an MPLS format. Other formats for the forwarding information may also be used for the forwarding to packets through the fiber optic ring network.

Please amend the paragraph on page 39, line 24 to page 40, line 19 to read:

Figure 8 is a flow chart illustrating a method in a node for forwarding a packet of data on a TDM fiber optic ring network according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. Referring

now to Figure 8, a node, by way of example, node 616 of Figure 6 receives a data packet similar to packet 612 of Figure 6 (step 502). The node then examines the label of the received packet to determine how to process the packet (step 504). By way of example, the processor of the node communicates with its internal storage device that contains programming instructions. The processor executes the programming instructions to extract the label in the received packet and to store it in memory for futher analysis. Thereafter, the node 340 determines whether the packet is to be reconstructed into an IP packet and then output from an output port of the node (step 806). More specifically, the processor (according to stored computer instructions), in the preferred embodiment, examines a specified port identifier that identifies an egress port from the fiber optic ring network to an external device (e.g., to an IP router or IP node external to the fiber optic ring network). If the port identifier is one of the nodes node processing the data packet, then the node examines a forwarding table as a part of processing and forwarding the packet.

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